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ABSTRACT

Detailed materials for the assessment of language use in a responsive environment are provided for teachers and teaching assistants. Part A consists of a manual and guide for language assessment. A brief account of the responsive model's approach to language instruction is given. Additional sections introduce and describe the observation and assessment instrument (OAI), and provide guides for its use and scoring. Part B presents the OAI: an instrument which focuses on several kinds of classroom language used to instruct, indicate resources, and give choices. For each category of language use, assessment criteria are listed and a rationale is offered. Scoring scales for preschool and primary school aged children are included. Part C provides a language assessment questionnaire for teachers and teaching assistants. How the OAI can be used for self assessment by teachers and teaching assistants is indicated in Part D. (Author/RH)

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A. ASSESSMENT OF LANGUAGE IN A RESPONSIVE ENVIRONMENT

Manual and Guide for Use of Observation Instrument

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by Margot Biestman

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ASSESSMENT OF LANGUAGE IN A RESPONSIVE ENVIRONMENT

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Forming a "Responsive" Language Program

A teacher or assistant who is "responsive" to children in language is one who makes use of children's experiences -- what they come to school with -- their life style, the language they speak, the games they play. The focus is on children's individual similarities and differences rather than on "deprived" or "compensatory education," or on the "need to catch-up."

A teacher or teaching assistant of three- to five-year-old children needs to focus her attention on listening to the language that children are speaking, to help children hear what they are saying, and to appreciate their words and style of speaking. She may do this in various ways -- by letting children listen to their own voices on tape or by listening for children's sounds which will lead to their learning sound-symbol relationships later. She may take dictation from children when they talk about their experiences, describe their art work, and tell stories. She may read back to the children what she has written in dictation. She may listen to children's natural language -- their words and speech patterns. She may read back to the children some of what they have said, as preparation for learning to read.

A teacher in kindergarten through third grade needs to continue listening to the language children are speaking and then to use it to teach reading and writing, rather than introducing foreign reading material before the children are aware of -- and have learned to appreciate -- their own words.

In order to make a bridge between what is familiar and what is unfamiliar, teachers and teaching assistants should use skills which children have when they come to school. Language experiences may develop through use of the children's various sense modes (touch, smell, taste, movement, observation, listening). A given area of language needs to be related to other areas of language so that they are not taught as separate subject matters, as in the past. Learning to recognize letters in the alphabet through children's natural movement and scribbles is an enjoyable way to learn. Moreover, teaching what is relevant and meaningful to children is certainly one keystone to helping them develop a healthy self-concept.

In forming a language program which is meaningful for children the teacher or teaching assistant must focus on <u>how</u> she teaches a skill in a certain activity, rather than on just the skill or the product. She needs to give instructions in such a way that children may express themselves individually. Children need to learn to use each other as resources in a language activity -- for solving problems -- so that they do not depend only on the teacher and so that they may learn to give and take with one another. Most importantly, children need to learn how to make choices and to find alternatives. They need to learn to work within guidelines or limits they are given and to find out what the consequences may be for going beyond limits which are set by both the teacher or teaching assistant and a group of children.

Many educators have recognized that in the teaching of reading or language arts, most textbooks do not take into account, children's background or experience. Skills are often taught by means of dry drill exercises, content material is often irrelevant to children, pictures are often ambiguous. The language is dead and children of many different backgrounds may quickly lose interest. Texts which purport to deal with black children simply change the color of the child in the pictures. The content material is still oriented mostly to "middle-class" white contexts.

Though some teachers and assistants are aware that textbooks do not take into account children's backgrounds or experience in the teaching of reading, the teachers are still faced with a problem -- school districts and parents are demanding that children's reading scores increase. This situation creates tremendous pressure for the teachers. Many teachers say that they would like to use a language-experience approach but that children then would not earn high enough reading scores. Yet these children don't achieve high reading scores with skills taught via the present texts. Some teachers and assistants recognize that texts simply do not meet the children's needs.

Therefore, the problem becomes not one of throwing away texts, but modifying them in a more "responsive" way until a teacher becomes comfortable enough to form her own curriculum that fits the needs of the children. To teach needed reading, writing, and art skills she can use the language, and movement experiences that her children bring with them to school. These need to be related to one another in an "integrated" program.

Some teachers may have difficulty in teaching reading by using the language the children speak. Because some teachers have been oriented to teaching with language and reading texts and workbooks, it is difficult for them to begin using the children's language and background experience in their teaching.

Some have attempted to make changes from traditional teaching in large groups with textbooks, to immediate use of small groups and use of children's language; this effort has met with failure at times because the change came too fast. Many teachers were not clear about their own objectives, capabilities, and limitations or the need for more organization in making changes.

Some who have "jumped in" to language experiences have thrown away the familiarity, structure, organization, and skills provided by the texts. Language experience is usually taught as an isolated subject, not as part of or in relation to other class activities or "subjects."

This kind of a leap leads to what Hauss and McHugh* cite as some of the disadvantages of the language-experience approach.

> "There is no. . .evidence of an organized, sequential, systematic skill development program (in the language-experience approach). Yet provision is made in the

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*Hauss, Walter F., and McHugh, Walter, The Teacher's Reading Program, New Hall Reading Guide rev. ed. pp. 123, 124, and 125.

Language Experience Approach for the teacher to build and augment such a program with the aid of the teacher's guides. (It) . . . allows the . . . teacher great freedom . . . For less experienced teachers this may become an untenable burden."

"Perhaps the chief advantage, as well as the most striking disadvantage, of this approach is that the initiative is squarely placed on the teacher and her class to utilize this method to its full advantage."

Some advantages to the language-experience approach are that:

"It is child-centered and builds on the child's own interest and abilities. It relates . . . all the language arts . . . and allows . . . for the development of children's creative abilities."

No one text or language-experience approach is the "right" one. A teacher needs to synthesize, from several different approaches to reading, one which works best for her. This process takes time and personal investment. It is important for a teacher to begin where she feels most comfortable -- by using the material she has and moving forward from that point.

It is up to the teacher to take the responsibility of deciding whether or not she is willing to make changes, what changes she is willing and not willing to make, at a pace which is appropriate for her. She needs to think about what she will gain and lose in making these changes.

It is important to keep in mind that this route toward a more relevant language curriculum may be slower but may produce more long-lasting results, enriched with deeper sensitivity and understanding.

Objectives for a "Responsive" Language Program

The following objectives are of primary importance for a "responsive" language program:

1. Use of children's spontaneous language and activities as a motivation for reading readiness and reading and for achieving a more healthy self-concept.

2. Use of children's experiences with their basic senses (listening, observing, movement, touch, taste, smell) which they come to school with -- to make the bridge between the familiar and the unfamiliar in language and reading.

3. Integration of reading readiness and reading with the other language arts -- not taught as separate subject matter.

4. Focus mainly on how a teacher teaches, rather than solely on what.

5. Modification of textbooks to include children's experiences.

6. Use of children's evaluation as a part of the language program.

Introduction to Use of Instrument for Observation and Assessment

An in-depth language assessment instrument must cover a broad range of content and process in the field of language and cannot be covered in a short period of time. It must be used in conjunction with training and self-assessment -- to find out where a teacher or teaching assistant is at the beginning of the year in a specific area of language (listening, art, reading, etc.) and where she might like to be in six months, a year, or later. (For use of this instrument in training, see page A- .)

For those interested in making an in-depth assessment in language development over a period of time, we recommend competency-based training in language development, focusing on specific areas of interest.

In order to meet the needs of some trainers, teachers, and teaching assistants who want to obtain some kind of estimate of assessment in a short amount of time, part of a more far-reaching instrument has been abstracted.

Description of Sections of the Instrument

Because of the enormity of the field of language and because an observer would not be able to choose what specific kind of language activity would be taking place in any one day he is going to observe (e.g., reading, listening, art, writing, music, etc.), we have chosen to deal with:

2.1.0. - 2.5.3.

Some of the structure and process of effective teaching in any language activity (listening, reading, etc.). This portion may be used in a specific learning activity of any kind (this includes math, science, etc.). This section includes teacher's or teaching assistant's use of:

a. Instructions 2.1.0. - 2.1.6. (page B-2)
b. Use of Resources in a Language Experience 2.2.0.- 2.2.5. (page B-5)
c. Choices in a Language Activity 2.3.0. - 2.3.2. (page B-8)
d. Limits and Consequences in a Language Activity 2.4.0. - 2.4.9. (page B-10)
e. Integration of Child's Experience in Language Arts 2.5.0. - 2.5.3. (page B-15)

In the section on "integration," there is emphasis on the importance of relating one language activity to another, using several media, rather than teaching language arts as separate subjects.

In this section, an observer writes a description of a specific activity for a 10-minute time period, and later circles "a" or "b" for what he has observed.

The structure and process in this section leads toward healthy self-concept (see Part III of Observation Manual in Assessing a Responsive Environment, FWL, June 1973, Natividad De Anda), and provide an atmosphere for creative problem-solving (see Part IV, Joanne Yinger). All items in this section are appropriate for three- to five-year-olds, as well as for grades K-3.

2.6.0. - 2.6.2. (page B-19)

A mark in this section indicates "for grades K-3 only." This portion is a checklist of language material in the classroom which the teacher or teaching assistant may use to teach reading readiness and reading in relationship to other language arts. In this content section there is positive emphasis on use of children's natural or spontaneous language, and use of art work and familiar phrases and rhymes. The use of this content is necessary to lead toward culturally relevant material (Part V, Fran Lewis & Oscar Uribe). For evidence of this content, refer to physical environment (Part I, Keith Alward).

2.7.0. - 2.10.3.

Samples of specific kinds of language activities. A mark in this section indicates grades K-3 only. In this section the emphasis is on the "how" of teaching in some specific language areas (use of spontaneous language and dictation for pre-reading and reading, modification of texts, page B-23; use of various sense modes in language, page B-28; creative writing or dictation, speaking, spelling, page B-32; identification of skills, page B-35).

Since writing, art, reading, and listening experiences would not all occur during the time an observer is present, the observer asks the teacher or teaching assistant to answer the items in this section from knowledge of their overall language program. The observer may score after receiving the answers.

This section is not to be considered as part of the 20-minute observation. It deals with teacher's and teaching assistant's overall language program.

Assumption: Basic Language Skills

Presumably teachers and teaching assistants who will be assessed and/or who will be using this instrument to assess their own teaching are already teaching children basic pre-reading, reading, and other language skills in some way. Various possibilities may include:

1. Ways teachers and teaching assistants have been taught when they were children.

2. Ways teachers and teaching assistants have been taught in various teacher-training institutions and/or through consultants and other trainers.

3. Various texts or programs teachers have used.

4. Ways teachers and teaching assistants themselves have evolved after being dissatisfied with what they have been taught (techniques which didn't produce results in ways they wanted).

5. Own experiences and observations of others in classrooms.

Although we do not deal with assessment of acquisition of basic language skills (e.g., consonant blends, interpretation of what was said or read, how to look words up in dictionary, etc.), we fully recognize the importance of acquiring these skills and fully intend that these skills be taught. In this instrument, however, greater emphasis is placed on how those skills are taught so that a child may integrate them into his life and find meaning and use for them.

Glossary of Terms

A "Responsive" Teacher or Teaching Assistant:

A highly "responsive" teacher or teaching assistant is one who is sensitive to her own needs as well as to children's.

He or she not only teaches basic language skills, but focuses mainly on HOW those skills are taught rather than just teaching them. He or she teaches these skills according to what is most important, relevant, meaningful to the child as an individual -- helping him build his self-concept while helping him expand in his intellectual development.

He or she accepts a child and helps him to discover and describe the similarities and differences in his background experience in relation to other children and to the teacher -- without criticizing or calling him "deprived" because of his differences.

He or she helps a child to move at a pace which is comfortable and appropriate for him, rather than making children "catch up." He or she not only gives choices and sets limits which are appropriate for each child but also gauges what is appropriate for him or herself as a teacher. A "responsive" teacher or assistant finds out what is familiar to a child from his home experience and what skills he brings spontaneously to a learning situation. She uses some of what he brings (his strengths, his natural language, his art, movement, listening, sense of touch, taste, etc.) in teaching reading and writing -- making a bridge from the familiar to the unfamiliar. A "responsive" teacher or assistant is one who helps a child communicate himself to himself and to others, and to interpret others to himself. This effort takes time, energy, talent, training, and personal investment.

Integration:

"To digest or assimilate an experience." -- Eugene Sagan

In order to help a child assimilate a skill he has learned in one language activity (listening), allow him to relate it to another area (art, identification of letters); e.g., children listen to sounds they hear outside, choose one sound, make that sound as they scribble with crayon on paper, then identify letters in scribbles.

Listening - art - writing
sound symbol

For an experience to become meaningful, a child needs the opportunity to explore it in several media, rather than learning by rote memory. A child also needs the opportunity to evaluate a learning experience for himself (what he liked, didn't like, wants to change for next time, etc.).

Spontaneous Language:**

Language children speak most naturally as they talk or play informally with one another. Teachers and teaching assistants may listen during these times and write down some of the children's spontaneous language,

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*Adapted from basic concept developed by Dr. Eugene Sagan and Juanita Sagan at Institute for Creative and Artistic Development, Oakland, C. 1967.

**Use of Spontaneous Language from "Language Experience, Vol. II," by Margot Biestman, Far West Laboratory, 1971.

either to read back to them later or to choose words to teach reading (words found in most easy-to-read books), or for children to read to one another.

Limits:

> "A prescribed maximum or minimum amount, quantity or number; to set bounds for; implies setting a point or line in time or space, or a speed or degree beyond which something cannot or is not permitted to go" (without consequences) -- Webster's 7th Collegiate Dictionary.

Limits in this section deal not only with classroom rules for safety and behavior which teacher will or will not tolerate, but also with the amount and kind of material and media to be used, boundaries of physical space, and minimum amount of work expected.

Resources:

> "A source of supply or support; available means; something one turns to. . . . . for source of supply." -- Webster's 7th Collegiate Dictionary

Resources here include teacher, teaching assistant, parent, other children, materials in and outside of classroom, reference material, etc.

Focus:

> "A center of activity, attraction, or attention." -- Webster's 7th Collegiate Dictionary

Focus in writing (2.8.0. - 2.11.0.) means that a teacher gives a direction so that a child may direct his attention to one aspect of an event and relate that event to himself and others.

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Some Expectations in Using Instrument

It is important to note that a 20-minute observation is not accurate for assessing a teacher or teaching assistant's overall peformance over a period of time. It is natural and to be expected that teachers and teaching assistants will be inconsistent.

For example, in one activity a teacher or teaching assistant may offer little to no choice and use dull, irrelevant content with no provision for children's likes or dislikes; whereas she may, on the same day, provide an activity with choices and opportunity for likes and dislikes. At one time the teacher's use of groups may be effective, at another time less so. This teacher or teaching assistant may need help in identifying what was successful in one activity and in applying that to another IF she is uncertain.

A teacher or teaching assistant may be certain but not ready or willing to do more than she is doing. Since it takes more energy and careful study and planning to teach "responsively," a teacher or teaching assistant must not expect herself to teach this way in every activity or continuously. It is not realistic for a trainer or observer to have this expectation either. It may be appropriate for one teacher or teaching assistant is to teach one activity "responsively" per day, for another every two days, for another once per week.* To find some factors which affect the degree to which teachers and teaching assistants may be "responsive," refer to the competency-based training unit on language.

For recommended ways of working with teachers or teaching assistants using this instrument for training purposes rather than 20-minute observation and assessment, see Booklet D.

*After writing descriptions of and evaluating her own teaching for a year, one teacher decided that she was able to teach approximately two hours out of every six "responsively," which meant she was teaching one-third of the time above standard. To ask more of herself would have been inappropriate, she felt.

Instructions for Observer

2.1.0. - 2.5.3.; 2.6.0. - 2.6.2.

For 20-minute observation and assessment of language -
-- observation of a specific activity in language
-- teacher or teaching assistant and small group of children (3-8) or large group

Preparation

1. Before going into a classroom, ask the teacher for permission to observe and let her know what you will be observing. The language activities should consist of a teacher or assistant working with a small group of children (3-8) or a large group.

2. If the teacher is willing to let you observe, ask her if she would like comments or feedback from you later, either verbal or written. Give her the option of not receiving feedback if she does not want it.

3. Ask teacher what language activities will be going on the day you plan to observe and what time these will be taking place. Plan to arrive far enough in advance of the language activity so you can become acquainted in the room.

4. Before going into the classroom, read through the assessment instrument and this section of the manual in order to become acquainted with the categories and checklists, scoring and rationales.

5. After reading, if you are willing, write:

   a. two things you expect you will like about using this instrument, and two things you expect you will not like about using this instrument.
   b. OR, two things you expect to see in the classroom you will visit, and two things you do not expect to see.

   1)

   2)

   3)

   4)

Observation and Scoring

Note: A▲ next to any category indicates that category is for grades K-3 only. If observing three- to five-year-olds, use scoring scales on page .

1. In the classroom, give yourself time to become acquainted in the room. Do not expect to take everything in at once -- nor to begin observing right away, before you are ready.

2. Turn to Content for Language, (see section 2.6.0. of instrument, page B-19). You may choose to circle these items in this category before or after the other categories, according to what seems most appropriate to you.

You may need to wait until the end of an activity to circle and score Integration of Language Arts (section 2.5.0., page B-15). You may also need to wait to examine children's work in several language activities over a period of time to score accurately.

3. Turn to blank page at the beginning of the instrument, page . Observe a language activity for 10 minutes. As you are observing, write a description of what you see going on. After 10 minutes of writing, you may need to stop and wait for the end of the language activity to note if there is a follow-up activity or not (2.5.0.).

4. When you have finished writing your description, turn to the checklists (2.1.0. - 2.5.3., pages B-2 - B-15.)

   Place a circle around each item which you observed taking place (a, or b)
   Place a ? next to each item that you are undecided about.

5. If the teacher is not occupied, ask her whether she is willing to answer questions which you are unable to answer from direct observation.

6. After you have marked each checklist, enter scores on scoring pages at the end of the instrument, pages B-38, 40.

7. Enter grades K-3 score on page B-38; enter score for preschool (3-5 year olds) on page B-40.

2.7.0. - 2.10.3.

1. At the end of the day meet with teacher and/or teaching assistant and ask if she is willing to circle the items which are true for her (2.7.0. - 2.10.3., pages B-23 - B-35).

   Alternatives:
   a. ask teacher or teaching assistant to answer which item is true for her after you read aloud each part.
   b. make a photocopy of 2.7.0. - 2.10.3. and ask teacher or teaching assistant to fill it out and return to you.
   * c. ask teacher or teaching assistant to fill out a questionnaire for this section, see Booklet C, rather than reading or giving her a copy to score herself. You score after reading her answer to questionnaire.

*This method is most highly recommended. See Booklet D for appropriate training.

2. In section 2.10.4., the observer asks teacher or teaching assistant what skills she was teaching during 20-minute observation. (See 2.1.0. - 2.5.3. of instrument.) Then observer circles a or b.

3. After the teacher or teaching assistant has marked each checklist (2.7.0. - 2.10.3.), enter scores at the end of the instrument, pages B-39, 41.

4. Enter grade K-3 score on page B-39. Enter score for preschool (3-5 year olds) on page B-41.

5. Criteria and rationales follow each checklist in the instrument.

Conclusion: (2.1.0. - 2.10.3.)

1. After observation if you are willing, write:

   a. two things you liked about using this instrument and two things you did not like
   b. OR: write two things you observed that were similar to what you expected and two things you observed that were different from what you expected.

      1)

      2)

      3)

      4)

Note: The first few times, the observer may need to take more than 20 minutes to observe and score in section 2.1.0. - 2.6.2. Time required will decrease as observer becomes more familiar with instrument.

Feedback:

1. Give yourself time to prepare feedback. It's better not to give feedback on the same day that you observe. Avoid making negative comments if you have no suggestions for helping the teacher.

2. If the teacher has said she would like comments or feedback from you and is not specific about what she would like comments on or does not specify what kind (negative or positive), try the following:

   a. write three things you liked which you observed
   b. if you can provide them, write three suggestions for extending what you liked or three suggestions for change.

Checking Categories and Scoring After Observation

Instructions:

1. Place a circle around each item a or b which you have observed in categories in the instrument.
2. Place a ? by each item you are unsure about.
3. After completing checklists in the instrument enter scores in this section of the manual.
4. Enter K-3 score on pages B-38, 39. Enter score for 3-5 year olds on pages B-40, 41.
5. Read criteria and rationales for clarification.

Explanation of Scoring

A score of 0 indicates what we perceive as "standard" teaching -- what has been most common in teaching, according to "convention."

Any score above 0 is one that we consider more "responsive," unusual, satisfying, "creative" -- according to criteria for a Responsive Language Program.

High scores above 0 are like "frosting on a cake" of teaching.

A ▲ next to a category indicates that item is for grades K-3 only.

Score sheets for grades K-3 will be found on pages B-38, B-39.

Separate score sheets for teachers and teaching assistants of three- to five-year-olds will be found on pages B-40, B-41.

Note:

Although an observer places circles around items a or b in each category and scores 1 point for a (in most cases) and 0 points for b, it is extremely important to keep in mind that a teacher or teaching assistant will not always be a or b, but rather may be on a continuum between a and b.

2.1.0. - 2.5.3. For K-3rd Grade and Three- to Five-Year-Olds

Assessment of Some of the Structure and Process in Any Language Activity

Instructions
Resources
Choices
Limits and Consequences
Integration

2.1.1. Do not score for either item circled.

2.1.2. - 2.5.3. Score 1 point for each item a which is circled.*
Score 0 points for each item b which is circled.

* When there are sub-members [e.g., 1), 2), 3)....etc.] under item a, score each subitem circled as 1 point. [e.g., In section 2.1.2., if both 1) & 2) are circled under a, score 2 points. In section 2.5.1., if 1), 3), 6), 8) are circled under a, score 4 points.]

Enter totals for grades K-3 on page B-38.
Enter total for three- to five-year-olds on page B-40.

Refer to note on expectations, page A-11.

2.6.0. - 2.6.2. For grades K-3 and three- to five-year-olds.

A▲ indicates category is for grades K-3 only.

Assessment of Content for Language Arts

2.6.1. Score 1 point for each item circled #1-21.
Score 0 for each item #22-27.

2.6.2. Score 1 point for item a; score 0 for item b.

Enter K-3 total on page B-38.
Enter three- to five-year-olds total on page B-40.

2.7.0. - 2.10.3. For grades K-3 and three- to five-year-olds

A▲ indicates category is for grades K-3 only.

Some Specific Areas of Language

2.7.0. - 2.7.5. Pre-Reading and Reading

Score 1 point for each item a which is circled.
Score 0 points for each item b.

When there are sub numbers [e.g., 1), 2),.....] under item a, score each subitem circled as 1 point.

2.8.0. - 2.8.2. Use of Various Sense Modes

2.8.1. Score under 5-8 year olds OR 3-5 year olds

Score 1 point for each sub number circled under a (5 is maximum)
Score 0 points for item b.

2.8.2. Score 1 point for each sub-number circled under a (5 is maximum).

2.9.0. - 2.9.4. Creative Writing and/or Dictation, Spelling (5-8 year olds)
Speaking (3-5 year olds)

2.9.1. Score 1 point for each sub-number circled under a (maximum is 10).
Score 0 points for each sub-number circled under b.

2.9.2. - 2.9.4. Score 1 point for each item a which is circled.
Score 0 points for each item b which is circled.

2.10.0. - 2.10.3. Identification of Skills in a Language Activity

Score 1 point for each item a which is circled.
Score 0 for each item b which is circled.

Enter total for grades K-3 on page B-39.

Enter total for three- to five-year-olds on page B-41.

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- My own teaching experiences.

- The concepts and process of "integration," use of "focus," "choices within limitations," and processes contributing to healthy self-concept, adapted with Natividad De Anda from the work developed by Eugene B. Sagan, Ph.D., and Juanita B. Sagan at the Institute for Creative and Artistic Development, Oakland, California. These concepts have also been adapted by Fred Newton, Project TRIM, Northwest Laboratory, c. 1973.

B. ASSESSMENT OF LANGUAGE IN A RESPONSIVE ENVIRONMENT

Observation Instrument and Criteria, Rationales, and Scoring

by Margot Biestman

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ASSESSMENT OF LANGUAGE IN A RESPONSIVE ENVIRONMENT
OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT

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Observation: Sections 2.1.0. - 2.5.3.

1. Observe a language activity which involves teacher or teaching assistant and small group of children (3-8) or large group.

2. Write down what you see teacher or teaching assistant saying and doing. Write what child or children are doing. (Write down facts, as if you were a reporter for a newspaper. If you have personal feelings or value judgments, indent them about 5 spaces, so you or teacher and teaching assistant may separate facts from value judgments and feelings. Facts may be verified. Value judgments and feelings may not be. Your report may be used as a reference by you and teacher or teaching assistant.)

2.1.0. INSTRUCTIONS

2.1.1. Observation with Instructions Given

a. Instructions were given during observation (either by teacher, teaching assistant, or materials).
b. No instructions given by teacher, teaching assistant during observation.

2.1.2. Observation Without Instructions Given

a. If instructions are not given:

1) simple materials are provided for children to experiment with (e.g., ribbons, chicken wire, burlap, yarn, tapestry needles, etc.)
2) teacher or teaching assistant picks up on what children are doing and provides accompaniment to what children have initiated (if child starts a dance or song, teacher fits music to what child is doing or helps child to extend what he has begun himself -- asks him if willing to talk about what his experience has been, write or draw it)

b. Teacher or teaching assistant interrupts what children are doing, or imposes her own ideas, or does not provide accompaniment (leaves children to do "own thing").

2.1.3. Instructions Contribute Toward Discovery

a. Instructions are open-ended so that children may come up with a variety of responses, e.g.:

K-3rd grade - "Read pages 1-3 about Charles and his family. Tell a partner or me what in your life is the same as in the story? What is different? OR:
"Write what is similar in your drawing of yourself at the beginning of the year to your drawing of yourself now? What is different?

3-5 year olds - "Roll the cookie dough -- What happens when you squeeze it?" OR
"Weave ribbons in and out of chicken wire in a way that pleases you -- try it too tight, too loose."

b. Instructions are narrow and direct children to "right/wrong" or "fill in the blank answers" e.g.,

"Read pages 1-3 and answer the following:

Charles is a boy. T F
Emily is a boy. T F
They live in _____."

2.1.4. Clarity of Instructions

a. Instructions are very clear, most children are not confused -- able to do assignment with minimum of further information (understand concept well enough to follow instructions).
b. Unclear instructions, confusing to many children, complex, either too many or given too rapidly.

2.1.5. Instructions Given for Various Levels -- Individualizing

a. Various individuals are given some separate instructions -- or instructions are such that all children can do a part.
b. Same instructions given to all children, regardless of different levels.

2.1.6. Instructions Allow Choices

a. Instructions are given (or situation and materials are set up) so that children have a choice for self-expression within the instructions.
(e.g., children are asked to draw lines on paper, but they may choose which way they do it -- combinations of thick, thin, wide, narrow, long, short.)
b. Instructions direct children to do things in specific ways (all children color same ditto sheet, maybe even with specified "right" colors).

Criteria and Rationale

Instructions: 2.1.0 - 2.1.6.

Criteria:

1. Instructions are given which contribute toward discovery.
2. Instructions are clear.
3. Instructions are given to children on various levels of ability and interest.
4. Children have choices within the instructions to express themselves individually.

Rationale:

Instructions which help a child to explore and discover, to find out more about himself and how he communicates with others, and to make others' ideas meaningful to him actually help children to learn. Instructions which are orders often are more commands than helpful instructions for learning. There are times when statements of direction are appropriate ("Please sit down or go to a quiet corner," etc.).

If instructions are unclear or too numerous, children may become confused. If children are given choices within the instructions, each may find how he solves problems in individual ways. NOT just one way is correct. If instructions are given on various levels, children have an opportunity to take pride in what they have accomplished.

2.2.0. USE OF RESOURCES IN A LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE

2.2.1. Variety of Materials

a. Children have a choice of using a variety of different materials or media (books, pictures, artwork, writing) to complete work in a language arts project.
b. All children use the same materials (books, pictures, ditto sheets) to complete a project.

2.2.2. Teacher's Use of Material Children Bring to School

a. Materials that children bring to school are used to teach specific listening, observing, reading, writing, or other language skills.
b. Materials that children bring are not used as part of a learning experience, or there is no evidence of material brought by children.

2.2.3. Children Use Each Other as Resources

a. Children are asked to use (or they do use) other children as specific resources:
e.g., in working on a problem
getting feedback on their work (what others like, dislike, suggestions);
comparison of similarities and differences in their work, or in what they see, hear, touch.

b. Children are not asked to (or do not) talk) with one another about a lesson, an experience, a book, each other's work -- or children are permitted to interact only for purposes of checking "right" or "wrong" answer; or children interact, but without specific focus of ongoing language experience.

2.2.4. Teacher's Use of Children's Ideas

a. Children are asked for their ideas and suggestions. These are used in the language activities (child offers ways he has found for doing something, e.g., how he would divide an apple among six children, or teacher or teaching assistant says: "We are going to make a play yard of clay. What do you suggest we put in it?" or "If you were teacher, what would you do the same as this activity? What would you do different? How would you teach another person to do this?").
b. Children are not asked for ideas or suggestions. Or if they are asked, their ideas are not incorporated into the activity.

2.2.5. Use of Children's Own Self-Experience as a Resource

a. Children's experiences at home and school (thoughts about themselves, sounds they make, expressions in pictures of themselves) are used to teach pre-reading, reading, writing, and speaking skills.
   e.g., "Draw a picture of yourself at the end of the year. Compare it to the one you did at the beginning of the year. Write or tell what is the same, what is different."
   or: "The sound I heard you make with cars as you played was 'rrrr' -- someone else said 'ooo.'" Teacher then writes symbols for sounds children have made.

b. Children's own self-experiences are not used to teach pre-reading, reading, writing, and speaking.

Resources: 2.2.0. - 2.2.5.

Criteria:

1. Children have a variety of different materials from which to choose.

2. Teachers use materials which children bring to school, to teach specific language skills.

3. Children use each other as resources.

4. Teacher uses children's ideas and suggestions when teaching.

Rationale:

If children learn to rely on resources other than the teacher, they may learn to become more independent because they have many sources from which to choose. If a teacher maintains herself as the only resource, she may place herself in a position of "godliness," where the children rely on only her, play to her indispensability, and become less able to check their perceptions and therefore more reliant. If children are not given opportunity to "use" each other as resources, they may think themselves unworthy or "put down." A teacher who encourages and uses inside school what children bring from outside school is helping them to appreciate who they are and where they come from.

2.3.0. CHOICES IN A LANGUAGE ACTIVITY

2.3.1. Kinds of Choices Offered

a. 1) Children have choice of doing all parts of an activity or doing parts of an activity.
(e.g., some draw, some write three words, some write a story)

2) If child chooses to not do activity, he is given an alternative which is related to activity or given a time when he will do an activity (if teacher has time).
(e.g., children are taking turns passing around a shell, feeling it, and putting it to their ears. Direction is to draw a picture of themselves touching shell, and to write three words about their experience. One child says he doesn't want to. Teacher gives directions to write or draw what he would rather be doing or write or draw what others looked like when they felt the shell -- child is still within activity.)

b. Child must participate in all of activity, or child is given an alternative which is unrelated, or many choices are offered according to child's whim. Child does not have to make up lesson (e.g., in a reading activity, where teacher is presenting specific skills, child says he doesn't want to, so is given a puzzle and doesn't want that, so is given another game).

2.3.2. Children's Choice to Come and Go To and From Activity

a. Children have choice to join an activity if they are willing to follow rules set by group and/or teacher OR: children have choice to not join an activity or to stop doing an activity and leave the group to go to another if they have a constructive plan (agreed upon by teacher).

b. Children are given no choice of joining or leaving a group.

Choices: 2.3.0 - 2.3.2

Criteria:

1. Children have choice of doing all of an activity, doing parts of an activity, or doing an alternative but related assignment.

2. Children have choice to join an activity or to leave an activity if they have constructive plan for themselves in another activity.

Rationale:

Giving children choices aids in minimizing a great deal of resistance and frustration. If a teacher feels it is important for a child to learn a specific skill and a child is resistant, she may be able to suggest an alternative which will involve the child in some aspect of the activity, or may present that skill in a different way at another time (IF she has time and energy). There are times, of course, when teachers do not have time or energy to offer alternatives; there are also certain expectations and requirements which need to be met so choices cannot be given every time. However, if they are given most of the time, children will be less frustrated and may better accept occasions when no choices can be provided.

2.4.0. LIMITS AND CONSEQUENCES IN A LANGUAGE ACTIVITY

2.4.1. Clarity of Rules or Limits

a. Teacher or teaching assistant state behavior that they will or will not tolerate (these may be posted in room or understood by children)
e.g., children or teacher are able to tell observer what behaviors are and are not permitted -- these include protective limits -- safety of children, protection of child from being bothered by another or interrupting teacher or group.

b. Limits are neither clearly stated nor understood (e.g., children interrupt, push, shove, wander, or teacher and teaching assistant make up rules as they go along).

2.4.2. Limits in Working Areas

a. Physical limitations are clearly laid out, and children are clear about what space they have to work in. These limits support the working conditions of others (e.g., crowding or spreading into other areas). Children can tell what is permitted and what is not.

b. Physical limitations are not clear.
(e.g., There is crowding, or activities extend into one another and disturb other children.)

2.4.3. Limits of Work Expected

a. 1) Children can tell minimum amount expected of them in an activity
e.g., K-3rd grade - minimum amount of written work
3-5 year olds - what to classify, clean-up

2) Minimum amount expected is according to ability of child -- not all have same minimum

b. Amount of work expected by all children is the same, individual differences not taken into account, or children cannot tell what is expected of them when asked or are asked to do more than capable of.

2.4.4. Limits of Activities and Materials Used

a. 1) There is a limit to the number of activities in which a child may participate.

2) There is a limit as to variety of materials used which children may manage easily.

b. No limits set for number of activities or materials (e.g., no limits so child and teacher may discover how he works when he has few of something, OR, so many choices are provided whenever child wants something that he does not have to deal with limits at all.)

2.4.5. Children's Contribution in Setting Limits

a. 1) Children contribute to making/modifying games and setting limits for them.

2) Children contribute to making/modifying limits for behavior.

b. Teacher or teaching assistant set almost all limits for child's behavior or how activity is carried out. Children do not participate in helping to set limits.

2.4.6. Clarity of Consequences

a. Teacher or teaching assistant clearly state consequences for going beyond limits.
"If you interrupt this group, please sit by yourself until you are ready to come back to the group. If you come back and you are still not ready, then I'll send you away -- or I will take five minutes away from your free-choice time."

b. Teacher or teaching assistant does not state clear consequences or may keep repeating rules or giving lectures or saying, "How many times do I have to tell you?"... (shakes her finger).

2.4.7. Children's Contribution in Setting Consequences

a. Children have an opportunity in helping to determine some of the consequences for their going beyond limits. They are asked for suggestion for setting own consequences (however, teacher or teaching assistant has final say on what is appropriate or not).

b. Teacher or teaching assistant set all consequences -- do not ask children to participate.

2.4.8. Limits and Consequences Are Consistent

a. Teacher or teaching assistant is consistent.
(No crossing streets or walking ahead of teacher on field trip -- enforced for all children) or teacher and teaching assistant is consistent with individual children who have limits set specifically for them.

b. Teacher or teaching assistant is not consistent; some limits are extended or eliminated, consequences are not enforced.
("If you were playing with that, the rule is to put it away." The child doesn't. The teacher does or asks another child to put it away.)

2.4.9. How Teacher or Teaching Assistant Deals with Breaking of Limits

a. When a rule or limit is broken, teacher or teaching assistant state factually, "John, the rule was....you broke that rule and the consequence is....." or "You have done _____ which is not permitted. I'd like you to think about what you think makes sense for you to do as a result. Check your idea with a friend, then check with me."

b. Teacher or teaching assistant puts child down when he breaks a limit.
(e.g., "John, can't you ever learn?" "See, I told you that would happen.")
Or consequences are given which child doesn't respect.
(e.g., Child is disrupting a group of children, will not follow rules, and is sent out of the room to sit on a bench and not move. Child runs around and plays. Principal sends child back into room).

Limits - Consequences: 2.4.0 - 2.4.9.

Criteria:

1. Teacher or teaching assistant states behavior she will and will not tolerate in a learning activity.

2. Teacher or teaching assistant states what area/space children have to work in during activity.

3. Teacher or teaching assistant states minimum amount of work expected or asks children what they expect.

4. Teacher or teaching assistant limits amount of material and number of activities so that child may work within limits of a situation (to find his own limits) and/or to minimize overwhelming him with too many choices.

5. Children contribute to setting of limits.

6. Teacher or teaching assistant clearly states consequences for going beyond limits.

8. Teachers and teaching assistants are consistent in giving consequences for children going beyond limits.

9. Teachers and teaching assistants state rules and consequences factually rather than criticizing a child for exceeding limits.

Rationale:

It is important for a teacher to be clear about her own limits -- setting limits for herself before she tries to set them for her children.

Sometimes "controlling disruptive behavior" is thought of as synonymous with the subject of "limits" when, in reality, it is only partly a factor -- or is perhaps the result of causes other than children's so-called "emotional," "home," or "disruptive behavior" problems. Many "disruptive behavior" or "discipline" problems have been blamed on children when their behavior may be an appropriate response to some of the conditions listed below. In fact, the child's behavior may be an especially appropriate response to the teacher's lack of setting her own limits (#6). A child cannot begin to direct himself until the teacher is clear about her own limits and rules and until she states them clearly -- to pave the way for a child to begin to set his own limits and begin to develop self-direction.

1) A curriculum which doesn't relate to the child and what he wants to learn;

2) A teacher's misjudgment of a child's limits because she is not clear about her own;

3) Misteaching or not teaching;

4) A room arrangement or structure which invites disruption by allowing for dispersal of energy because of too many choices;

5) Over-stimulation and no focus;

6) A teacher who is afraid to state her own limitations or her own tolerance level in a "responsive" classroom; or

7) A "disruptive" teacher who interferes with children's activity or demeans them.

It is important for children to learn to pace themselves. They cannot do this if the teacher does not set limits which are appropriate for herself and the children. A teacher needs to become sensitive to those children who cannot yet pace themselves. She needs to set limits for those children until they are more ready to move on their own. If a child goes beyond a limit which the teacher has set, the teacher needs to know which consequences she can enforce that will be meaningful to the child -- consequences a child can respect; or the teacher will frustrate herself, scream her head off, make empty threats, keep her anger inside, or grimly smile on and on. She may become a laughing-stock for a child. For example, a teacher who gives a consequence of sending a child to the office for misbehaving needs to be sure she has support from the principal for keeping him there (if, indeed, that is a consequence a child respects) or she will find him being returned to her with a "ha-ha-ha." Finding appropriate consequences for not going beyond limits is not an easy task. We know of no magic pill, formulas, or easy answers. A teacher needs to experiment and leave room for error so that she doesn't expect too much of herself.

Often teachers are afraid to state their limits, or occasionally scream at children for going beyond clearly stated limits, or give consequences for misbehavior because of the image of themselves as "mean" teachers. Many have a mistaken image of "I must be nice and let them do what they want." However, teachers may be much meaner to themselves and the children if they don't state their limits and rules.

Some of the "meanness" is that the children will be deprived of useful feedback for their behavior; they will not be able to learn what is expected of them in given situations, nor will they learn when and what they do is appropriate or inappropriate. It is important for a teacher to become aware of what her limits are so that the children may be clear about what they can expect from her.

2.5.0.* INTEGRATION OF CHILD'S EXPERIENCE IN LANGUAGE ARTS

(The following items deal with the relationship between a child's experience in one area of language [e.g., listening] and another area of language [e.g., art]. These items may be observed following a part or all of one language activity or may be scored after several activities or talk with teacher and examination of children's work in the classroom.)

2.5.1. Relationship of One Language Activity to Another

a. An experience in one area of language is related and applied to an experience in another area of language.

Examples:

1) Listening related to art, reading, writing, oral language
(e.g., children listen to sounds outside, choose one sound, make that sound as they scribble with crayon on paper, identify in their scribbles letter matching sound; OR: children listen to record and draw a picture of something they heard, dictate or write a description of their picture.)

2) Art related to spontaneous play
(e.g., children draw pictures of themselves on swings or playing ball or the movement of the ball as it was hit, or pictures of constructs made during block building, or clay objects, or things found or played on in the yard.)

3) Spelling and punctuating related to writing
(e.g., teacher or teaching assistant teaches spelling from children's spontaneous vocabulary or creative writing. Or children choose which words they have said or written that they want to spell -- punctuation is part of creative writing.)

4) Movement related to art, writing, oral language
(e.g., children move like their favorite animal, then draw a picture of themselves moving like the animal, write or tell about how they moved and sounds they would make.)

*Adapted from basic concepts developed at Institute for Creative and Artistic Development, by Eugene B. Sagan, Ph.D. and Juanita B. Sagan. Integration as used here means to digest or assimilate an experience, by experience in several media.

These examples may vary from activity to activity, time to time; however, basic elements remain the same.

Note: (next page) Example #8 -- Observer may fill in example which he has observed, if there is one.

5) Rhythm instruments related to movement, art
(e.g., children use instruments and move with the beat, against the beat, draw movement of rhythm, or motion of a percussion instrument.)

6) Cooking related to taste, smell, measurement, oral language

7) Reading related to art, oral language, dramatic play, games
(e.g., children draw a favorite character from a story they have read [together, or individual stories, then write a word about that character on a Language Master, next day tell story about that character or act it out.] OR: child reads a word from his own spontaneous language, puts word in word bank, draws picture of word, recognizes word in book.
OR: child practices a reading or reading readiness skill in a game or practices skill by teaching to another child.)

8) Other comparable _____.

b. Language arts are taught as separate subjects -- no relationship from one subject to another, no work to help assimilate skills or experiences. After a child finishes a specific assignment, he goes to another separate subject or unrelated activity -- no follow-up or expansion of idea in different media.
(e.g., Children are in a group reading orally with the teacher, or sitting at a listening center listening to a story. When they are finished they go to a group for spelling [not related to reading activity] or go to make play-dough shapes.)

2.5.2. Variety of Follow-Up Activities

a. After child finishes a specific assignment, teacher or teaching assistant uses a variety of ways to help child to reinforce what he has learned
(e.g., sometimes a reading assignment followed up by child choosing words he wants to spell, sometimes child choosing word or character he wants to draw a picture of, sometimes choosing three word and making up a song or rhyming words.)

b. After a child finishes a specific assignment, he follows up by drill exercises most of the time or the same type each time, or there is no reinforcement or follow-up at all.
(e.g., drill work in workbook after reading a lesson, memorizes flash cards most of the time.)

2.5.3. Evaluation of Activities for Integration

a. As part of a language activity or after a language activity, child has an opportunity to evaluate activity for himself. (e.g., answer some of the following:

What did you like?
What did you not like?
What would you do again in the same way?
What would you do differently?
Which ones came out the way you wanted them to?
Which did not? Why?

Children may draw what they like or don't like, write it, or share verbally with one another and/or teacher.)

b. Teacher or teaching assistant is the only one to make evaluations -- child doesn't have opportunity to evaluate the activity, or no one evaluates the activity.

Integration: 2.5.0. - 2.5.3.

Criteria:

1. An experience in one area of language is related and applied to an experience in another area of language -(e.g., an experience in listening is applied to an experience in art).

2. As a follow-up lesson, teacher or teaching assistant helps child extend or reinforce a skill learned in one area of language (reading) to another area of language (drama, writing). Language arts are not taught as separate subject matter.

3. Children have opportunity to evaluate language activity (what they like, don't like, would change).

Rationale:

"Every experience has the potential of producing, or leading to, learning. What determines whether learning takes place or not is what the person does with what he or she selects from an experience. It is the activities that follow the experience that provide the means of reorganizing the elements of the experience into something that is learned."*

An analagous situation is one in which a child is given an opportunity to have an experience in one medium (e.g., reading from any text or from a familiar phrase, practicing skills in a workbook, or reading during free-reading time). To help a child to expand and use this experience, let him express what was important to him in another medium (fantasy, movement, or art, or expansion of a phonics lesson). Later, to further the process of "integration" (digestion or assimilation) in still another medium, he may tell or write a description of his artwork or his experience in doing it. This leads to story-telling, reading, writing.

If children have an opportunity to extend their reading lesson into other areas of the classroom, it may become more meaningful to them. Another possibility is that new content may better be assimilated by letting children experience it in more than one medium. Varied repetition thus offers a new experience each time. Reading taught by itself may rob children of enriched experiences in the medium which may be most familiar and related to them. If children relate reading to media which are familiar, they may become more highly motivated to read.

Another way a person may integrate or assimilate material is by telling or writing what he liked or didn't like and why, as a way of beginning to evaluate what is important for him. As a child works in various media, using the integrative process, he may be developing new skills in movement, art, language, reading, writing, with the work in each medium being related to another media. At the same time, he may have the opportunity to develop a more healthy concept of self.

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*Quotation from Natividad DeAnda at National Follow Through Workshop, Sumter, S.C., 1971 -- adapted from concept of "integration" developed at Institute for Creative and Artistic Development.

2.6.0. *CONTENT FOR LANGUAGE ARTS

2.6.1. Check which items below are physically evident or accessible to children in the classroom:

1. Children's names
2. Children's familiar phrases
3. Children's own natural or spontaneous language (e.g., during talk and play with one another, dramatic play, art activities, talk as they move and dance, share with one another during reading, writing, listening, observing)
4. Children's art work, movement activities, dance, play, etc. (without pattern or model by teacher)
5. Books made by children containing own words and drawings
6. Photographs of children
7. Language Master cards with children's words
8. Tape recordings of children's language
- ▲9. Word boxes containing words children have asked for (to read)

  Charts (K-3rd grade) made from Items 10-15: or 3-5 year old children talk about Items 10-15
10. Field-trip experiences
11. Words from children's spontaneous language (see #3)
12. Commercials, TV programs, billboards, grocery-store labels
13. Filmstrips or movies children have seen, records they have heard
14. Rhymes from books (nursery rhymes, choral reading, poems, songs)
15. Rhymes from children's jumprope games, handclapping chants, hopscotch
- ▲16. Words easiest to read (taken from children's spontaneous language and correlated with words from Dolch list or other)
- ▲17. Letters and messages to and from children

*If observer cannot tell from direct observation, ask teacher or children.

▲ 18. Sentence strips and/or stories written by or about children in class

19. Others which are comparable to #1-#18 _____

20. Books from home or library which reflect children's interest, age, and background.

21. Games which teachers or teaching assistants have made or modified for children within class

▲ 22. Charts of words easiest to read (from texts or lists from grades K-3--Dolch list, 250 most commonly used words list, Durrell's list of Rhyming Phonograms--not correlated from children's spontaneous language)

23. Packaged games

▲ 24. Texts

▲ 25. Programmed series

26. Commercial workbooks and ditto sheets, coloring books, coloring dittos

27. Children's art, movement, dance using a pattern or model by teacher

2.6.2. Use of language material for pre-reading, reading, and writing.

a. When the teacher or teaching assistant teaches pre-reading, reading, and writing activities, she uses material mainly from #1-21 or a combination of #1-21 and 22-27.

b. When the teacher or teaching assistant teaches pre-reading, reading, and writing activities, she uses material mainly from #22-27.

Content for Language: 2.6.0. - 2.6.2.

Criteria:

1. Language for learning pre-reading, reading, and writing comes from language children are most familiar with in their lives. (Their own natural or spontaneous vocabulary, own art work, movement, games, movies or TV, grocery-store labels, etc.).

2. Language material is displayed and/or accessible to children.

Rationale:

It is important in a "responsive" language program for the content to relate to children's background and experience so that learning may be more relevant to them than in the past. Content needs to be meaningful and important; those actions which are meaningful are what a child himself does and says. If children learn first to appreciate what they do and say -- and if they learn to read about themselves, they have an opportunity to gain healthier self-concept. They may learn at the same time to appreciate others' work and later to read with more interest and enthusiasm.

Since children come from various backgrounds and life styles, their interests are varied and diverse. The content for language in a classroom needs to reflect these similarities and differences of the individuals.

Scoring: Level of recognition of what is relevant content for children

1. Items #1 - 21 deal with experiences which are closest to a child and, therefore, most meaningful. The content lends itself readily to individuals within the classroom. A teacher who scores most of her points in this area is one who respects children and recognizes the importance of what they as individuals bring to her classroom.

2. Items #22-27 deal with experiences which are more remote from experiences of the child. The content usually does not reflect individuals within the class. The teacher who scores most all or all of her points in this area is considered minimally responsive in that she may be satisfying district requirements, and her own needs for the moment, and may also be teaching the children some basic skills. One of the "costs" here is that children may respond with resistance and resentment to learning and may "turn off" completely and/or drop out -- and that is a high price to have paid.

Note: A teacher who combines some items from #1-21 and some items from #22-27 may be a responsive teacher and may be meeting some of the children's needs and some of her own, if she is:

1. required to use #22, 24, 25, and 26 by the district.

2. not organized enough to use a total curriculum based on #1-22;

3. able to make the content of #22, 24, 25, 26 more meaningful than if she adheres to the written guidelines of the game or text.

A teacher who scores all of her points in #1-21 may not be responsive at all if she:

1. does not know how to use the material;

2. uses so much of it that the children become confused.

In other words, the number of items circled in #1-21 does not necessarily mean that the teacher is a "responsive" teacher. The score must be taken into consideration in relationship to other parts of this assessment instrument, particularly how it is used. A teacher may have only two items circled in #1-21 (spontaneous language) and may base her curriculum on use of those two in a highly "responsive" way, as well as meeting district requirements in language skills and also helping children to pass tests. Another teacher may have many items circled in #1-21, and may turn to them as "display or show material," but not actually use them to teach language skills.

2.7.0. PRE-READING AND READING *

2.7.1. Use of Dictation

a.

1) Teacher or teaching assistant takes dictation from spontaneous language -- language children speak most naturally in their work and play -- or in informal chats with teacher or teaching assistant. (These may be a rush of complaints, statements of anger, or remembrances of things past -- shared spontaneously with teacher.)

2) Dictation is taken, although not of spontaneous language -- dictation is of description of children's artwork, field trips, retelling of stories, etc.

b. No dictation is taken

2.7.2.

a. Teacher or teaching assistant takes dictation, using children's own words without changing their language.

b. Teacher or teaching assistant takes dictation but changes words or style to her way of speaking, or tells child the way he says it is not right

2.7.3 ▲ Use of Spontaneous Language in Teaching Reading

a.

1) Teacher or teaching assistant most often uses words and phrases from children's spontaneous language (words children most naturally speak) to teach reading skills (e.g., phonics: consonants, blends, vowels, sight words, sound-symbol relationships; also for comprehension and grammatical structure of language)

2) Uses words from children's dictated stories, description of art work, field trips, after movies, etc.

b. Teacher or teaching assistant most often uses word lists, texts, card games, etc., to teach basic reading skills (does not use spontaneous language to teach basic reading skills)

* 2.7.0. - 2.10.3. Items are to be circled and scored by observer asking teacher or teaching assistant which behavior she uses in each category (a or b) in her overall language program. OR: scored by teacher or teaching assistant herself. OR: Teacher or teaching assistant is to fill out questionnaire (Booklet C). Trainer is to read questionnaire and then score 2.7.0. - 2.10.3.

2.7.4. ▲ Modification of Texts or Programmed Series

a. Teacher or teaching assistant identifies reading skill from text (e.g., word recognition, consonant blends), and finds another way of teaching that skill so it is related to child's experience (e.g., Who in this class has a name that begins with sounds of "cl" -- Clara) or

(comprehension; interpreting emotional attitudes -- "I'm going to read Sam's story of his playing Bingo with Armon. Each child draw pictures of what you might have looked like if you were Sam, or if you were Armon. Describe your pictures; what do each of you look like?").

b. teacher or teaching assistant teaches skill directly from text or programmed series without modification.

2.7.5. ▲ Required Reading programs -- Non-Modifiable

a. if required to use a program which cannot be modified, a teacher or teaching assistant uses another part of the day for use of spontaneous language in reading, expression of children in art, reading, writing

b. teacher or teaching assistant uses required program, does not use another part of the day for spontaneous language, etc.

Pre-Reading and Reading: 2.7.0. - 2.7.5.

Criteria:

1. Teacher or teaching assistant takes dictation in child's own words without changing words or demeaning child for the way he speaks.

2. Teacher or teaching assistant takes dictation or uses words and phrases from children's natural or spontaneous language to teach reading skills.

3. Teacher or teaching assistant modifies texts or reading programs so skills are more related to child's experience at home and school.

Dictation: 2.7.1. - 2.7.2.

Rationale:

If the teacher takes dictation, it is important to take it as the child says it, rather than changing or "correcting" it. If it is changed or "corrected," a child is being demeaned (not accepted) for his way of talking. He may learn that "the teacher's language is right and mine is wrong" and may depreciate himself or his family for not talking "right." After dictation, reading, and sharing, teachers may give opportunities to hear similarities and differences in sounds of language, rather than "right" or "wrong" (see C). The rationale for writing "this" and not "dis," "going" and not "goin'" is based on the fact that at this time most books that children see and use are written with this spelling.

The score is 0 if no dictation is taken or if it is taken but the teacher "corrects" the child or demeans him. In this case the gain in learning to read what is called "Standard English" is too high a price to pay when weighed against the potential loss of a healthy self-concept. In this case, taking no dictation is far better than taking it in a damaging way.

Using Children's Natural or Spontaneous Language: 2.7.3.

Rationale:

The more a teacher can appreciate and use the language a child comes to school with, the more the child may feel accepted and be willing to read not only his but others' language. It takes a highly responsive teacher, who is willing to listen to, record, and use children's natural language, to teach reading. A teacher who is this responsive will need to find words from a child's spontaneous vocabulary which are also found in some "easy-to-read" books, texts, and word lists, in order to help the child make a bridge from what is familiar (own language) to unfamiliar (that of authors).

If a teacher uses the child's language from descriptions of art work or field trips, etc., the language tends to be less spontaneous in many cases -- often becoming examples of what a teacher specifies or wants or expects to hear ("The tree is pretty. The flower is nice."). This language is usually more removed from the child and his own self-expression. However, this conclusion cannot be generalized as some teachers are able to obtain spontaneous language from children from descriptions of art work, etc. -- e.g., "monster -- black and dark," "a cow balloon -- feet and hair." This usage is something to watch for and begin to distinguish when possible; "natural language" used authentically by children in their own style contrasted to "forced or altered language" by children in another style for teacher. Naturally, children will assimilate one another's and the teacher's dialect and language through association with one another. How a child uses that language depends on his own style.

A teacher who not only records children's language and reads it back to them, but also teaches children to read it and asks them to read to one another, is giving the children a deep appreciation and respect.

Similarities and Differences Between Natural or Spontaneous Language and Standard English

Rationale:

A child needs to explore similarities and differences in his own and others' language in order to take credit for his own, communicate with others, and find meaning in another person's communication to him. Learning is impeded when the focus is on "right" or "wrong" language. Children need to experiment with sounds -- putting their tongues and lips in all sorts of different positions and seeing different symbols for sounds they make. If a child says "dis" and sees "this" in a book, he may be confused---that "th" and "d" are two different symbols representing the same sound to him. He may find out that there is a difference for someone else---the placement of the tongue. "This" is spoken with the tongue between the teeth to make the sound of "th" and "d" is spoken with the tongue in back of the teeth. "Goin'" and "going" are simply differences in where the tongue is placed. Neither is "right" or "wrong." When children have an opportunity to experiment and distinguish between different sounds they and others make, and symbols for these sounds, they have a choice of which they want to use; thus, they may understand and enjoy more fully their own and others' language.

"This" and "going" are found in most books. It is unfortunate, up until this time, that so many books for children are written in what is called a "Standard English," whose content is often "deac." In many cases the language is so different from what a child speaks that it is actually an entirely different language to be learned and translated. Many children are able, while they are reading "Standard English," to read the words and make quick translations of pronounciation and meaning back to their own language; but they are rarely given credit for their swift and able work and are likely to be treated in a demeaning fashion.

Modification of Texts: 2.7.4.

Rationale:

If a teacher can identify skills presented in a text and can present those skills using a child's sense modes and some of his own words which she has heard and recorded, she may help a child make more of a bridge between what is familiar and what is unfamiliar. If a child is given an opportunity to take what he has learned in a text lesson and apply or expand that in another area of the classroom, his learning becomes more personalized. If teachers present texts as they are written, children may not be able to identify with the pictures or the content in texts and they will be exposed often to unfamiliar or "dead" situations. Worse than that may be ambiguous pictures, meaningless vocabulary, outright lies, stereotypes, and demeaning aspects.

The more a teacher can modify a lesson from a text, the more meaningful she may help to make lessons for children. However, if a teacher is doing more than she is organized to do, and does not watch her priorities, she stands a chance of trying too much for her own limitations and letting other things, including her disposition, get out of hand. Making many modifications may not be worth the price of too much disorganization in other areas. A beginning teacher may be successful in diversifying just once a week.

Program Which Cannot Be Modified: 2.7.5.

Rationale:

At times there is material which does not lend itself to being modified, is not "responsive" in many ways described thus far, and is required to be used as is. In this case a teacher may have to say that there is a period of time during the day when she will be unresponsive; then she may devote other times in the day for responsive language experience. In this way she will be taking care of her requirements for her job and may be letting the children know that she has limits which she must work within, whether she likes them or not (a good model for children to see), and that she can give "goodies" at other times of the day. A teacher who is not willing to use other times of the day for "responsive" language may rob children of the experience of having something to compare the text or program with.

2.8.0. USE OF VARIOUS SENSE MODES IN LANGUAGE

2.8.1. Teaching Pre-Reading - Reading Through Use of Sense Modes

a. 1) In a language activity, a teacher or teaching assistant usually teaches pre-reading and reading within the context of an experience a child can have with several of his basic senses (touch, sight, hearing, tasting, smelling, moving).

5-8 year olds

Examples:

1) Sense of Touch (e.g., child feels the letter "S" made of sandpaper, touches shells when learning consonant blend of "SH")

2) Memory of Past Experience (e.g., what in the children's life is similar to or different from what they have read? Or what skill are they familiar with that can be applied or expanded to a new situation or problem in putting sounds and words together, what do they remember from field trip they want to draw or write about.

3) Visual Sense--Observation (e.g., seeing and recognizing symbols for some sounds they make, observing their own or each other's mouths in a mirror to observe different placement of teeth and tongue when they make sounds, drawing pictures of words they say or do, playing pre-reading and reading games for practice--commercial or teacher-made, seeing words beginning consonants of words for snacks they eat.)

4) Auditory Sense (e.g., repeating sounds heard, choral reading, going on "listening walks," listening to tapes of their own voices, stories and music familiar to them.)

5) Sense of Movement (e.g., "move like a snake," "say the first sound," "move around a figure 'S' drawn on the floor that begins with the sound of Sam's name," "move in response to a mood you are feeling now, to a word I read to you," or "move as your scribble moves on paper." Or "associate your movement with written words such as 'hop,' 'skip,' 'jump.'"; "move your finger on floor in the shape of an 'S'.")

3-5 year olds

Examples:

1) Sense of Touch (children have chance to experiment with touching and playing with various textures, then describe orally what they find out from experimenting -- experiment with water, sand, fingerpaint, describe experience - or what they like or dislike.)

2) Memory of Past Experience (recalling experiences children have had at home or school)

3) Visual Sense -- Observation (describing what they see in classroom or outside, in books, or as they play, themselves and their clothing.....)

4) Auditory Sense (repeating sounds heard on record, or listening walks, opportunity to talk and listen to one another; describe similarities and differences in sounds, experiment with mouths in different positions.)

5) Sense of Movement ("move like your favorite animal", "make sounds of animals," move around figures, experiment moving in various positions, manipulate games and toys, hop, skip, jump -- description of movement.)

b. Teacher or teaching assistant usually teaches language from program, texts, records, games, flashcards or memorizing -- does not use children's experimenting with sense modes for further teaching of language development.

2.8.2. Children Experiment with Sense Modes Without Teacher Using Them for Teaching

a. Teacher or teaching assistant gives children opportunity to experiment with various sense modes, but does not use them in her teaching of language -- does not give focus for further development.

1) Sense of Touch (children play in sandbox, feel various textures of materials, play with water and manipulative materials -- blocks, etc.)

2) Memory of Past Experience (children talk of past experience with one another, as they wish; however, teacher or teaching assistant does not give specific focus.)

3) Visual Sense -- Observation (children have opportunity of going on field trips or looking in books, or observing experiment with water or sand and measurement cups -- teacher or teaching assistant does not pick up use for teaching of language.)

4) Auditory Sense (children listen to records, listen to teacher's directions.)

5) Sense of Movement (children play in the yard, dance or move spontaneously, most of the time.)

b. Most of the time teacher or teaching assistant does not provide materials or opportunity for children to experiment using their various sense modes. OR teacher requires children to copy her when they use sense modes.

Use of Various Sense Modes: 2.8.0. - 2.8.2.

Criteria

1. Children have opportunity to learn pre-reading, reading and writing skills having experiences using their basic senses (sight, touch, hearing, tasting, smelling, moving).

Rationale:

If children, in learning the association of sounds with written symbols, are given an opportunity to use their experiences with various senses reading may become more relevant, individual and comprehensible. Furthermore, children may have more desire to read when their sensory experiences are included. Reading becomes a more "integrated" experience of the total body and mind rather than an isolated experience learned by memory.

If a teacher helps children to learn sounds associated with symbols and words in context with other sounds and words in a sentence or paragraph, children have an opportunity to use clues to figure out a word they don't know. Symbols, meaning, and grammar come together and become "integrated."

When children are only (or most often) taught sounds associated with symbols in isolated experiences (memorizing via lists, flashcards, or games), not only may they experience boredom but they will be cut off from experiences which can be most meaningful. Learning almost exclusively prevents children from really relating material by rote memory to themselves. What they learn may not really be learned inside - but rather stick like cockleburrs on the outside of a child's sweater as he rolls downhill. There are exceptions of course. Flashcards, lists, and games may be used for practice and repetition and may be beneficial, if they are not the only things the teacher uses and if they are used to help children assimilate what they have learned first in sensory experiences (not isolated).

It is important to note, however, that if children are exposed to too many sensory experiences to assimilate in any one lesson, they may be overstimulated and lose what they have set out to gain.

If reading cards, games, and phonogram matrixes are used to reinforce a lesson begun through use of children's experiences with several of their senses, the children may better understand why they are doing what they are doing. Games which are unrelated to a previous experience may be fun but may only touch the surface of understanding.

2.9.0. CREATIVE WRITING AND/OR DICTATION; SPELLING (5-8 YEAR OLDS) SPEAKING (3-5 YEAR OLDS)

2.9.1. Focus and Self-Expression

a. Child has opportunity to write or dictate descriptions, or speak with one another and teacher, using a specific focus (see glossary of terms and rationale)

Examples:

1) what he has observed (in classroom - under magnifying glass, animal on field trip, etc.)
2) situation in fantasy (imagine self in various situations, dreams, etc.)
3) his and other children's actions and activities (e.g., describe himself and others in a play they acted in, or describe their spontaneous play outside)
4) his personal ideas and opinions
5) his interpretations of movies, TV, peers' ideas, or books, himself and other people, places, things in relationship to each other - at home or school
6) his and others' artwork
7) similarities and differences between self and others in class or in story he's heard or read
8) retelling story in own words
9) what he likes and what he does not like (without teacher saying or insinuating that he shouldn't dislike)
10) other comparable _____

b.

1) Children are given opportunity to write or dictate or talk but with little or no focus ("Write about the rain," or "What did you do on summer vacation?" "Write about your picture" or "Write whatever you want")

2) Teacher or teaching assistant gives focus but not for self-expression (e.g, "Write or talk about what happened to Dick in the story"-- not related to self.)

2.9.2. Speaking or Writing Without Focus

a. Children talk with one another or write spontaneously. Teacher does not take part in giving focus for speaking or writing. Learning may be accidental.

b. Teacher or teaching assistant does not encourage children to talk with one another or write spontaneously.

2.9.3.

a. Children have opportunity to write or dictate or speak using own way of expression, including slang and vernacular, without teacher or teaching assistant changing child's ideas or ways of expression.

b. Teacher or teaching assistant changes or asks children to change their ideas, or teacher changes ideas or style for them, so the writing or speaking is more like her own, the way she was taught or the "right" way, or she criticizes a child for the way he writes.

2.9.4. Spelling

a. Teacher or teaching assistant teaches spelling from words a child has written in his creative writing and in context of his own writing.

b. Spelling is taught as separate subject from creative writing and spoken vocabulary. Words come from word lists, books, texts.

Creative Writing and/or Dictation, Spelling; 5-8 year olds 2.9.0. - 2.9.4.
Speaking; 3-5 year olds

Criteria

2.9.1. - 2.9.3. Self-Expression

1. Children have opportunity to write or dictate description and what they like and don't like, using their own way of expression without being critized or demeaned for the way they express themselves.

2. Children are given a specific focus for writing or dictation in order to communicate self to self or self to others.

2.9.4. Spelling

1. Spelling and punctuation are taught in context of child's creative writing or dictation rather than taught as separate subjects.

Rationale

Children need opportunity in speaking, dictation and/or creative writing to communicate themselves to themselves and themselves to others so that they may find out more about themselves in relationship to other persons, places, things. In order to do this, they may need a focus. A focus is like taking a camera and taking a look at one aspect of a total picture--so that a child may concentrate on one thing most important to him. If there are too many foci at once, a child may lose direction. If there is little or no focus, often no interest is shown because of too broad or too impersonal a range of vision. The results are often "dead" language or "I don't want to" or "I can't." A focus away from a child means that his work becomes identical to someone else's, he loses his own way of expression, which is like taking the camera away from the scene of interest of the child, so that the photograph does not depict him at all.

If spelling and punctuation are taught as part of the creative writing, rather than from word lists and texts, children may take more interest and may help each other with their words.

2.10.0. IDENTIFICATION OF SKILLS IN A LANGUAGE ACTIVITY
(To be answered by teacher or teaching assistant.)

Specific Language Skills

What specific listening, reading readiness or reading, writing, etc., skills were you teaching or were children learning during the 20-minute observation?

2.10.1. Identification of Specific Language Skills

a. Teacher or teaching assistant is able to identify specific language skills she is teaching or children are learning during the 20-minute observation (e.g., symbol with sound, consonant blends, word recognition, interpretation, etc.).

b. Teacher or teaching assistant is not able to identify specific language skills children are learning during 20-minute observation, or she is not clear about what language skills she is teaching.

2.10.2. Specific Skills in Teaching Process Contributing Toward Child's Healthy Self-Concept*

What did you use in your lesson which contributed toward a child's healthy self-concept? (e.g., How did you use instructions, choices, resources, integration, writing, etc.)

* See "Self-Concept" section of Observation Manual in Assessing a Responsive Environment

2.10.3. Identification of Skills Which Contribute Toward Healthy Self-Concept in Language Lesson

a. Teacher can identify 1-5 skills she has used in teaching process which contribute to healthy self-concept (e.g., in this instrument -- clarity of instructions, giving of focus, offering of choices within limitations, children's use of each other as resources, use of various sense modes, content used are important to children and reflect their interests, etc.).

b. Teacher or teaching assistant is not able to identify skills in teaching process which contribute to healthy self-concept.

Identification of Skills in a Language Activity: 2.10.0. - 2.10.3.

Criteria

1. Teacher or teaching assistant can identify skills she is teaching in a language activity.

   Rationale:

   If teachers and teaching assistants are not clear about what language skills they are teaching, they will not be able to be clear about where a child is and where he needs to be next in his language development. Being clear about what skills a teacher or teaching assistant is presenting is crucial to record-keeping and being able to report to administration, other teachers, and parents.

   If teachers and teaching assistants can identify what they are doing which contributes toward healthy self-concept (how they give instructions, use resources, etc.) they will be more able to design activities keeping these items in mind, examining what affect they have on children, not only in language, but many other activities in the classroom.

Sections 2.1.0-2.6.2.

Grades K-3

Categories of Assessment	Highest Possible Score	Teacher's Score	Range of "Responsive" Teaching	*Check which box teacher scores in from column 4
1 Instructions	6		5-6 highly responsive	☐ = 3
			2-4 responsive	☐ = 2
			0-1 standard	☐ = 1
2 Resources	5		4-5 highly responsive	☐ = 3
			2-3 responsive	☐ = 2
			0-1 standard	☐ = 1
3 Choices	3		3 highly responsive	☐ = 3
			2 responsive	☐ = 2
			0-1 standard	☐ = 1
4 Limits	12		9-12 highly responsive	☐ = 3
			6-8 responsive	☐ = 2
			0-5 standard	☐ = 1
5 Integration of Language Arts	10		7-10 highly responsive	☐ = 3
			4-6 responsive	☐ = 2
			0-4 standard	☐ = 1
Total Section 2.1.0 - 2.5.3.	36			
6 Content for Language 2.6.0. - 2.6.2.	22		12-22 highly responsive	☐ = 3
			6-11 responsive	☐ = 2
			0 standard	☐ = 1
Total Sections 2.1.0 and 2.6.0.		B-38		=

Sections 2.7.0. - 2.10.3.

Specific Areas of Language

Grades K-3

Categories of Assessment	Highest Possible Score	Teacher's Score	Range of "Responsive" Teaching	*Check which box teacher scores in from column 4
Pre-Reading and Reading	7		5-7 highly responsive	☐ = 3
			3-4 responsive	☐ = 2
			0-2 standard	☐ = 1
Use of Various Sense Modes	10		7-10 highly responsive	☐ = 3
			4-6 responsive	☐ = 2
			0-3 standard	☐ = 1
Creative Writing or Dictation; Spelling	13		6-13 highly responsive	☐ = 3
			4-5 responsive	☐ = 2
			0-3 standard	☐ = 1
Identification of Skills	2		2 responsive	☐ = 2
			0-1 standard	☐ = 1
Section 2.7.0. - 2.10.3. Total	32			=

Sections 2.1.0.- 2.6.2.

(Enter from previous page), Column 4 — — — — — — — — → =

Overall Total — — — — — — — — — — — — — — — → = ☐

(Add last two together for Overall Total)

25-29 highly responsive
15-24 responsive
0-14 standard

Sections 2.1.0. - 2.6.2.:

3-5 Yr.-Olds

Categories of Assessment	Highest Possible Score	Teacher's Score	Range of "Responsive" Teaching	*Check which box teacher scores in from column 4
1 Instructions	6		5-6 highly responsive	☐ = 3
			2-4 Responsive	☐ = 2
			0-1 standard	☐ = 1
2 Resources	5		4-5 highly responsive	☐ = 3
			2-3 responsive	☐ = 2
			0-1 standard	☐ = 1
3 Choices	3		3 highly responsive	☐ = 3
			2 responsive	☐ = 2
			0-1 standard	☐ = 1
4 Limits	12		9-12 highly responsive	☐ = 3
			6-8 responsive	☐ = 2
			0-5 standard	☐ = 1
5 Integration of Language Arts	10		7-10 highly responsive	☐ = 3
			4-6 responsive	☐ = 2
			0-4 standard	☐ = 1
Total Section 2.1.0. - 2.5.3.	36			
6 Content for Language Arts	18		10-18 highly responsive	☐ = 3
			9 responsive	☐ = 2
			0 standard	☐ = 1
Total Sections 2.1.0. and 2.6.0.				

Sections 2.7.0. - 2.10.3.: Specific Areas of Language

3-5 Yr.-Olds

Categories of Assessment	Highest Possible Score	Teacher's Score	Range of "Responsive" Teaching	*Check which box teacher scores in from column 4
Pre-Reading and Reading	3		3 highly responsive	☐ = 3
			2 responsive	☐ = 2
			0-1 standard	☐ = 1
Use of Various Sense Modes	10		7-10 highly responsive	☐ = 3
			4-6 responsive	☐ = 2
			0-3 standard	☐ = 1
Creative Writing Dictation	12		6-12 highly responsive	☐ = 3
			4-5 responsive	☐ = 2
			0-3 standard	☐ = 1
Identification of Skills	2			
			2 responsive	☐ = 2
			0-1 standard	☐ = 1

Section 2.7.0. - 2.10.3.

Total 27 =

Section 2.1.0 - 2.6.2.
(Enter from Previous page) column 4 ——— → =

Overall Total ——— → = ☐

(Add last two together for Overall Total)

25-29 highly responsive
16-24 responsive
0-15 standard

C. ASSESSMENT OF LANGUAGE IN A RESPONSIVE ENVIRONMENT

Questionnaire for Teachers and Teaching Assistants
In Specific Areas of Language --- 2.7.0. - 2.10.3.

by Margot Biestman

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2.7.0. - 2.10.3.
Specific Areas of Language

Questionnaire for Teachers and Teaching Assistants

2.7.0. - 2.7.4. Pre-Reading and Reading

1. Do you take dictation from children? Yes _____ No _____

2. If you do take dictation, how do you do it? Include in your answer what kinds of words or sentences you write down. Also include if you write children's language down as they say it or do you translate it into your own?

3. What kinds of activities are children involved in when you take dictation?

4. Where does language children listen and/or learn to read come from? (e.g., books [what kinds], their own natural [spontaneous] language they speak with one another? Nursery rhymes? Primers? Workbooks? Word lists?) Which do you use most often for reading readiness, listening, reading?

5. Which materials do you like and why - which do you have problems with and why?

6. ▲ If you use text or reading program, how do you use it? (As written? Or, what changes do you make?)

2.8.0. - 2.8.2. Use of Various Sense Modes in Language

1. Do you use children's experiences with various sense modes to teach language? touch, taste, movement, observation (sight), auditory — Yes _____ No _____

2. If you do, how have you used them? In what activities?

2.9.0. - 2.9.4. Creative Writing and/or Dictation; Spelling (5-8 year olds) Speaking (3-5 year olds)

1.▲ When you place an emphasis on creative writing, how do you teach it?

2. When you place an emphasis on speaking or oral language, how do you do it?

3. Write a sampling of what kinds of instructions you give for creative writing experiences or experiences in which you take dictation, or speaking/oral language.

4. ▲ If you teach spelling, how do you teach it?

2.10.0. - 2.10.3. Identification of Skills in a Language Activity

1. What specific listening, reading readiness, reading, writing, etc. skills were you teaching or were children learning during one 20 minute language activity today?

2. What skills did you use in your language activity which contribute toward a child's healthy self-concept or help children to learn something about themselves? (How did you give instructions, choices, limits, resources, etc.?)

D. LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

Guide for Training Teachers and
Teaching Assistants

Self-Assessment

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D. LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

Guide for Training Teachers and Teaching Assistants

Self-Assessment

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Use of Instrument for Training Teachers and Teaching Assistants

This booklet is for trainers of teachers and teaching assistants who would like not only to observe and assess, but to help a teacher make a self-assessment and to help her grow in her teaching over a period of time. This booklet contains statements of use of criteria, possible misuse of the instrument, and recommendations for appropriate use of the instrument. It includes plans for training, plans for teachers and teaching assistants to make their own self-assessment, and plans for trainer's observation and assessment with teachers and teaching assistants.

Use of Criteria *

It is not our intent to impose the criteria in this instrument as the "right" or the only grounds for deciding what is "responsive." They are based on values which have become important to us. There is a danger in giving them to a teacher or teaching assistant and asking her to accept them without first asking for and considering her own criteria. To ask her to take, accept, and use these may be like asking her to accept another set of textbooks in place of the ones she previously used, without giving her a chance to take credit for what she already understands and uses. Asking her to simply accept may also be asking her to deny or give up her own values.

A quote from a statement made by a Head Start program advisor expresses for us the principle of respecting what a person thinks and believes as the starting point for mutual learning:

> "I feel it is important to consider the values of parents and children in establishing the classroom environment; however, it is also important to consider the values of the classroom teacher. If a teacher feels she must leave her own values outside of the classroom, we are creating schizophrenic teachers. Just as we need mentally healthy children, we need mentally healthy teachers. The Responsive Education Program itself is a value system, and we need to remember this in working with teachers and children."

A teacher or assistant needs an opportunity to state her own criteria first, and then to compare hers with yours and ours. In what respects are they similar? In what respects are they different? (It is important to focus on similarities and differences rather than focus on values such as "right" or "wrong".)

When a teacher or assistant becomes clear about her own statements, then she may choose what she is willing to keep of her own, what new values she will want to resist, and which ones to accept, modify, or change. A different viewpoint becomes understandable only as a person is able to identify how the ideas can apply to his own situation. A person needs time to weigh what he may gain and what he may lose in trying out new ideas. He may need time to resist new ideas, with support for resisting until he is willing or ready. To be forced to take on new values (either openly or by subtle manipulation) may increase resistance and resentment.

* by Natividad De Anda and Margot Biestman

Possible Pitfalls or Misuse of Instrument with Teachers and Teaching Assistants

There is a danger in giving the entire instrument at one time to teachers or teaching assistants because of their possible expectation that they "should" be doing all these things, if not now, then in a short period of time.

They may "put themselves down" or feel badly about not doing enough. They may then demand more of themselves than is appropriate. They may need to take a little at a time and move at a pace which is comfortable for them, taking time to explore and discover what makes sense for each of them and what does not. If they demand too much of themselves all at once, the result may be a further demand on children and/or ill humor in the classroom.

It's also possible, if learners expect to take, understand, and work with too much of the instrument at once, that they may become overwhelmed by too much material, feel frustrated, and even turn away from the whole experience.

Some of them may take in more than others, depending on where each is in his own teaching.* It is important for them to choose parts that interest each of them. They may want to choose one or two categories they feel good about in their teaching and one or two categories they have trouble with or would like to change or find out more about. It is important for them to emphasize what they are doing already, rather than talking about all the skills they do not yet have.

It is important to not go into a classroom and show the entire instrument at once. Take just a few categories the teacher or teaching assistant and you, as the coordinator, have agreed upon, according to individual priorities.

*Refer to the following page, D-4, for "Decree of Responsiveness"

Degree of "Responsiveness" Depends on Many Factors:

a. Teacher or teaching assistant's experience in teacher training, teaching experience, and/or home experience (varying degrees of similarity to or difference from "responsive" teaching).

b. Teacher or teaching assistant's expectations of self and teammate.

c. Clarity of definition of roles between teacher and teaching assistant.

d. Understanding of similarities and differences of teacher or teaching assistant's values to values in this instrument.

e. Amount of acceptance and/or non-acceptance of the values inherent in this instrument.

f. How familiar (or unfamiliar) concepts in the instrument are to teacher's or teaching assistant's way of teaching.

g. Quality and amount of support (or lack of support) teacher or teaching assistant receives from:
   (1) principal and other administrators
   (2) coordinator
   (3) parents
   (4) each other

h. The language program used by the teacher or teaching assistant.

i. Coordinator's capabilities and limitations in helping teachers or teaching assistants if they are willing to take help.

j. Teacher's and teaching assistant's self-concepts.

k. Make-up of children in classroom (which children the teacher or teaching assistant can, or cannot, work with.

l. Teacher's or teaching assistant's degree of willingness to spend time, investment, energy on "responsive" teaching of language:
   (1) Outside influences which may affect amount of time, investment, energy, (social life outside school, religious activities, artistic interests, hobbies, sports).

   (2) Other priorities of interests at school (organization of classroom, learning centers, other subject matter, etc.).

Recommendations for Appropriate Use of Assessment Instrument for Training and Self-Assessment

The 20-minute observation form should be used (2.1.0. - 2.6.2.) to assess approximately where a teacher or teaching assistant is in teaching content and process in language at the beginning of a school year. Rather than asking teachers or teaching assistant to score themselves in section 2.7.0. - 2.10.3., ask each of them to fill out the questionnaire in Booklet C. From their responses, you score them in section 2.7.0. - 2.10.3.* It would be ideal to observe again in the middle of the year. If this is not possible, it is appropriate to observe at the end of the year, using the same 20-minute observation, questionnaire, and scoring. Note similarities and differences from the beginning of the year. Evaluate in what ways a teacher or teaching assistant has changed and in what areas.

Plans for Training

In training it is important to go at a pace slow enough for each person to assimilate what he is learning, and to give only as much material at one time as a person can assimilate. Many teachers or teaching assistants say that they want everything all at once, but this may tend to overwhelm them, confuse them, and push them in ways which would not be appropriate; they may lose in the long run. It would be appropriate to give each teacher or teaching assistant no more than two categories and rationales at a time. The following plan is designed to help teachers and teaching assistants to try out various parts of the instrument, two categories at a time.

Try this plan first with five to ten teachers or teaching assistants.

* By asking teachers or teaching assistants to fill out a questionnaire rather than to score themselves on the actual instrument, you may help them to focus more carefully on what they are doing. The task may help them to ask you leading questions so that you may give to them help out of your experience. Also, an open-ended questionnaire is preferable to asking teachers or teaching assistants to read and score themselves on an instrument, as it may minimize the danger of demeaning themselves for not "doing enough" or getting overwhelmed by seeing too much of what they "should" be doing even though they may not be ready.

Activity #1

Introduction to Use of Language Assessment Instrument - (Training with teachers or teaching assistants)

Meet with a group of five to ten teachers and/or teaching assistants together

OR: Meet individually with each teacher or teaching assistant.*

Purposes:

1. To introduce teachers and teaching assistants to use of language assessment instrument.

2. To give opportunity for teachers and teaching assistants to choose what two categories they would want to assess in language, according to their interest as much as possible.

3. For teachers and teaching assistants to clarify for themselves what is most "responsive" in something they have chosen to assess and what is "least responsive," according to their own values.

4. For teachers and teaching assistants to compare what they value as "responsive" with two categories in the instrument -- similarities and differences.

5. For teachers and teaching assistants to evaluate what was useful for them in the categories they read, what was not useful, what they would modify or change.

Instructions (to be given by trainer to group of teachers or teaching assistants)

1. Choose two categories from the following list which interest you and which you would like to assess yourself in and work on during this year.

* Refer to page D-20 for introduction to use of instrument with individual teachers and/or teaching assistants.

List of Categories in Language Assessment Instrument

Use of Instructions

Use of Resources in a Language Experience

Choices in a Language Activity

Limits and Consequences in a Language Activity

Integration of a Child's Experience in Language Arts

Content for Language Arts

Pre-Reading and Reading (Dictation, Spontaneous Language, Modification of Texts)

Use of Various Sense Modes in Language; Teaching Pre-Reading and Reading

Creative Writing and/or Dictation; Spelling (5-8 year olds)
Speaking (3-5 year olds)

Identification of Skills in a Language Activity

2. Write what you would be doing to be "responsive" in one of the two categories you have chosen.

3. Write what you would be doing to be "unresponsive" in one of those categories.

Note: What you write should be what can be observed by someone else. The focus for this assignment is NOT on "correct" grammar or spelling. The focus is on what you think of as "responsive" and "not-responsive" for you in your teaching.

Category 1

"Responsive"	"Not Responsive"

4. Share what you have written with a partner. Discuss in what areas you agree with one another and in what areas you disagree.

5. Read what is written in the assessment instrument in one of the categories you have chosen.

6. Write three points that are similar in what you wrote and in what is in the instrument.*

   1.

   2.

   3.

   Write three points that are different in what you wrote and in what is in the instrument.

   1.

   2.

   3.

7. Share what you have read and written with your partner.

* Comparison does not mean that one is "right" and one is "wrong." Some items may be left out by either the instrument or the teacher or teaching assistant. The focus for looking at similarities and differences is not to point out what is "good" or "bad," but to begin to take a look at values and to see if teachers or teaching assistants would like to see what they do already or would like to move in the same directions as those they read about in the instrument.

Activity #2 -- Continuation of Activity #1

(To be done by individual teachers and teaching assistants)

Write what you would be doing to be "responsive" and what you would be doing to be "not responsive" for the second category you have chosen.

Category 2

"Responsive"	"Not Responsive"

Repeat steps #4-7.

Write three points that are similar in what you wrote to what is in the instrument.

1.

2.

3.

Activity #3 -- Evaluation of Assessment Instrument by Teacher and/or Teaching Assistant

The following activity is designed so that the teacher and/or teaching assistant can evaluate for herself two (or more) categories in the assessment instrument.

Purpose:

To help teachers and teaching assistants integrate material from the instrument by making an evaluation.

Instructions:

1. In the categories you have chosen, write the following:

   a. two things you liked that you would use

   b. two things you would delete

   c. two things you would change

   d. two additions you would include

Activity #4 -- Self-Assessment by Teacher or Teaching Assistant in Classroom

This activity is planned for each individual teacher or teaching assistant, after completion of Plan #1 - if she is interested in making a self-assessment using the instrument. The teacher or teaching assistant needs to have copies only of the two categories she has chosen.

Purposes:

1. For teacher or teaching assistant to apply language assessment instrument to own teaching.

2. For teacher or assistant to self-assess her lesson.

3. For teacher or assistant to find out what parts of a lesson she felt good about and what parts she would like to change next time.

Instructions:

1. Write out a plan for teaching a language activity that focuses on one or both of the categories you have chosen.

2. Teach your language activity.

3. After teaching, write what you did that you feel good about and what you did that you did not feel good about.

4. Circle which items were true in your activity (from categories you have chosen in the instrument).

5. Score yourself in those categories.

6. Write what your response is to your score.

7. Read the rationale, if you would like. What do you agree with? What do you not agree with?

8. Write what you would like to keep the same for another language activity.

9. Write what you would change. What do you expect to gain from the change? What do you expect to lose?

10. If you make changes next time in another language activity, evaluate what you liked about the change and what you did not like.

11. You may repeat this process of self-assessment whenever you like, choosing either the same two categories you chose before (if that is what is most useful for you to assess your progress) or choosing one or two new categories as you feel ready.

You may want to assess your teaching each day, once a week, every two weeks, or at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. Ideally, your coordinator will observe and assess with you your teaching of a language activity in two categories you have chosen -- once at the beginning of the year, once in mid-year, once at end of the year. Choose another teacher with whom you would like to share the language activites you have written down.

What could you modify from the other teacher's plan for your own use?

Activity #5 -- Observation of Two Categories Chosen by Teacher or Teaching Assistant (by coordinator)
Meeting of Coordinator with Teacher and/or Teaching Assistant

The following plan (for you as a coordinator) lets you observe an activity agreed upon by both you and the teacher and/or teaching assistant, and score in the same categories the teacher or assistant has chosen. It is advisable to observe and meet three times during the year to assess growth and development in areas that the teacher or assistant has chosen to work on.

Purposes:

1. To learn more about teacher and/or teaching assistant.
2. To find out where you and teacher and/or teaching assistant agree in assessment where you disagree.
3. To provide "feedback" from you to teacher or teaching assistant on her teaching in two categories she has chosen.

Instructions:

1. Observe an activity agreed upon by both you and the teacher and/or teaching assistant.
2. Score in the same categories the teacher or teaching assistant has chosen.
3. After school is over for the day and/or when you, teacher, and/or teaching assistant are ready, meet and compare scores.

   Which scores are the same as the teacher's or teaching assistant's?

   Which are different?

4. Discuss similarities and differences.

5. Suggested questions to ask teacher or teaching assistant:

   a. What are you pleased about in your activity and/or your score?

   b. What are you not pleased about?

   c. What do you want to work on as a next step?

*6. "Feedback" from coordinator to teacher or teaching assistant.

You may have "feedback" for the teacher after observation.

A teacher or teaching assistant also needs to be given the real choice of not taking feedback, rather than being forced to take it just because you have it to give or being forced to think she "should" have it "because it is good for her." If she takes feedback under these conditions or feels she has to, you run a risk of her demeaning herself, or doing something for "you" rather than for herself, or harboring resentment. Given the choice to refuse feedback, she may come through with more strength and willingness if you wait until she is ready and asks for feedback or suggestions later. Avoid making negative comments if you have no suggestions for helping the teacher or teaching assistant.

If a teacher or teaching assistant chooses to have feedback and is not specific, the following is suggested:

Mention three things you liked
Mention three suggestions for extending what you liked or three suggestions for change

Be aware that these suggestions need to be something the teacher or teaching assistant is able to do, not just what you could do. A teacher or teaching assistant needs the choice of not taking your suggestions or taking them. Ask her --

what she expects to gain by the change if she decides to try one
what she expects to lose by the change if she decides to try one

* Feedback here means a coordinator's description of the activity she observed, personal response to a lesson, personal insights gained from one's own experience, or suggestions which may help a teacher to evaluate preparation for the next step in her learning.
"The purpose of feedback/evaluation is:
1. Not to find fault but to improve teaching skills,
2. To give information for modifying materials or process of teaching,
3. To provide a basis for individual growth and development."
(from a paper by Margaret Robinson, Far West Laboratory, 1973)

Activity #6 -- Evaluation and Feedback

It is important for a teacher or teaching assistant to integrate changes and growth and development in her teaching over a period of time. The questions below are for teachers or teaching assistants who have been observed and assessed for the second or third time and/or who have read more than two categories in the instrument.

a. What is the same now in your teaching as before?

b. What is different?

c. What can you do now that you couldn't do before?

Some Results of Trying Out a Plan with Teachers and Teaching Assistants

The following is a sample of part of what happened when Gene Berry, Follow Through program advisor in Salt Lake City, Utah, tried out her plan for use of the assessment instrument with her teachers and teaching assistants.

"We followed the same basic procedure I outlined to you in Tacoma:

1. Allowed the teacher and assistant to choose a page or pages to work on.
2. Gave the teacher and assistant and myself copies.
3. Sat down with them about a week later to talk over the sheet.

We had some interesting results:

1. All so far would agree that the sheets gave them good ideas and suggestions.
2. The sheets provide a good basis for on-the-spot individualized inservice.
3. In every case so far, I have been able to use this in a positive reinforcing way.
4. It has been exciting to see a couple of teachers actually implement an idea or two that they got either from the sheet or from the discussion."

"END OF DOCUMENT"